Fort Vancouverarea students stop by the State Parks booth to make bracelets designed to help them understand the life cycle of salmon.



2,000 youngsters visit educational exhibit

As part of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery II event at Fort Vancouver in Vancouver, State Parks rangers, staff and volunteers worked with nearly 2,000 students and other visitors over the course of nine days in December.

Rangers presented an interpretive activity, "Life Cycle of the Salmon," to about 45 local school classes, reaching 1,125 students. Each class was allowed a 15-minute visit to the State Parks booth, where students created their own salmon life-cycle bracelets as rangers talked about the stages of the cycle.

In their brief time there, students made a bracelet, learned about the life of salmon and got a chance to talk to park rangers and learn about State Parks.

Led by the National Park Service, the Corps of Discovery II is a national mobile exhibit designed to provide visitors an introduction to the Lewis and Clark story.

WSPF donations a boon for parks

Since 2001, the Washington State Parks Foundation has been a supportive friend of the state's parks, raising more than \$2 million in donations for various park projects and moving State Parks toward Centennial 2013 goals.

The Legislature created the foundation in 2000 as a mechanism through which to bring private dollars into the state parks system. Kate Frew, executive director of the foundation, works with the volunteer citizen board of directors, who in turn works with the State Parks and Recreation Commission to identify projects on which to focus their efforts. Frew then acts as something of a matchmaker, contacting private foundations whose mission can be furthered by supporting specific park projects or programs.

One such recent pairing was with the family-owned Peach Foundation in Seattle, which funds programs that support youth education and vulnerable populations. It donated \$20,000 to State Parks' diversity camping program and \$15,000 to the newly renovated interpretive center at Lime Kiln Point State Park. In this case, the public and private pieces came together, Frew said. "These projects fit their mandate perfectly."

Individuals also donate money through the foundation because, like organizations, they are drawn to a specific project, or they have a personal connection to a state park, Frew said.

The foundation has five main focus areas: trail improvements; acquiring, protecting and conserving natural resources and critical habitats; environmental education; enhancing parks for underserved groups; and creating and leveraging volunteer efforts and getting the public involved.

"The foundation's mission is to enrich the quality of the parks," Frew said. "We do this by funding programs in recreational and educational opportunities and by helping to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources."

For more information about the Washington State Parks Foundation, call Kate Frew at (360) 352-2508.

Legislature votes to take away day vehicle parking fee

April 1, 2006, was the first day visitors were no longer required to purchase a vehicle parking permit in Washington's state parks.

The change was the result of a bill passed by the 2006 Legislature and signed by the Governor. The State Parks and Recreation Commission voted at its regular March 16 meeting to initiate a refund program, so that people who purchased an annual Natural Investment permit for parking must apply between April 1 and June 30, 2006, in order to receive a prorated refund for months left on their permits. Permit holders also may choose to donate their refunds. Instructions and information are available on the Washington State Parks Web site, www.parks.wa.gov.

The vehicle parking fee was initiated by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission following years of budget restrictions and a budget cut. The fee was collected statewide starting Jan. 1, 2003, with the revenue used to make long-needed park improvements and to keep parks open. During the time the fee was collected, it yielded \$11 million and

cost \$3 million to collect.

The new law, passed in a time when the state's financial outlook seems healthier, provided most of the funds to replace the fee, along with some money to cover energy costs that had continued to rise even with the downturn in attendance presumably from the fee. The agency will track its costs and attendance through 2006. The Legislature left open the option that Parks could return in 2007 to request additional replacement funds.

While Commission members and State Parks leadership expressed happiness that people may be freer to visit their state parks, they remain concerned about the long-term financial health of the agency.

"I'm optimistic that lawmakers will do as they promised in the 2006 session and revisit the issue of State Parks funding in the 2007 session to find a stable, dedicated source of operations funds for State Parks," said State Parks Director Rex Derr. "We're leaning on that promise."

Centennial 2013 Plan Recent En<u>dorsements</u>

Steven Tabacek, IT-Lifeline, Inc. • Del Morton, Kiwanis Club of North Mason • Michael D. Racine, Washington Scuba Alliance • Elizabeth Lunney, Washington Trails Association • Roxana Boroujerdi, Fun Times Ice Cream • Mel Wortman • Ernie Schurian • Doug Schoonover • David R. Tabacek • Ronald F. Gamache, Board of Yakima County Commissioners • Tim Wood, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department • Karen L. Johnson, Lewis County Historical Museum • Michelle Lougheed • Rebecca Renzelman • Jessie Nearing • Judy Hash • Melissa Bageant • Robert and Mary Feiler • Tiffani Ann Owen • Cris Kessler • Violeta Tejeda • Jacob Hourscht • Sheryl L. Rogel • Peggy A. Palm • Sammye R. Kempbell • Gina Melendrez • Mike and Peggy DeRosa • Judy Lawrence • Trudy Tutt • Donald A. Murphie • Allen Carter • Ron Partridge • Mary Aleshire • LeRoy C. Beavers • Lori and Joe Larson• Kathy Jacobson • Tom J. Crittenden • Louise Hudack • Daniel N. Jasper • Dusty S. Shelton • Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Maltais • Jim and Betty Compton • Mary Vincent • Christy and Jim Vizena • Pauline Sorensen • Susan Peeling • Steven M. Nordeen, Bellingham Parks and Recreation • Bill Conklin, Commanding Officer's Quarters Heritage Museum at Fort Worden

CENTENNIAL 2013 IN ACTION

Volunteers boost service at parks

There's a group of state park supporters across the state and even from other states who each year really put their backs into the support they give. They're volunteers

It's a group that's growing, as people connect with favorite parks or parks in general. So far, 2005 volunteer time sheets for State Parks report 271,052 hours contributed by 1,176 volunteers, up from 251,000 hours and 1,116 volunteers in 2004. The 2005 contribution is the equivalent of 129 full-time employees. The increase moves Parks toward one of its Centennial goals of 500,000 volunteer hours a year in 2013.

Without the commitment of these men and women and boys and girls, the state parks system would look much different. Volunteers have taken on pretty much any chore possible in a park, from maintenance projects that include recycling, picking up litter, tree trimming, lawn mowing and trail maintenance, to more specialized skills such as interpretive assistance or research projects, to providing office support in headquarters and region offices.

Volunteers function in different capacities. Individuals help out at parks as their schedules allow, working a few hours or more a week. Various community groups, such as Scouts, will likely work with park staff to identify a project or participate in special events. Long-term volunteers might stay at the park for a few weeks, and



Park host 'Tab' Tabacek spends hundreds of hours every year volunteering in Washington state parks.

park hosts might stay for an entire season. Hosts receive free camping and RV hookups in return for staying a minimum of 30 days.

Park host August "Tab" Tabacek of Renton, a retired operations shift manager for United Airlines, has put in hundreds of hours since 2002. He greets campers, answers questions and performs minor maintenance tasks in several parks.

"A good 80 percent of (the job) is public contact with people," Tabacek said. "Especially in the evening, you get to spend a lot of time talking with people."

Tabacek also helps recruit and train park hosts for the Northwest State Park Ambassadors program, a partnership program between Washington, Oregon and Idaho. He visits new parks in Washington every year so he can familiarize himself with what the state has to

offer. He estimates he spends up to six months a year on the road.

"So far I've gone to 15 or 16 new parks and will get to four or five more this year," Tabacek said. "I enjoy it ... the great variety of things and meeting wonderful people. It's great meeting all the rangers and staff – they just treat you like family.

"I really enjoy it. I didn't think I'd get this involved with it, but I'm enjoying every minute."

To learn more about volunteering or to see who received 2005 volunteer recognition awards, visit www.parks.wa.gov/volunteer.asp.

New campground, moorage at Sun Lakes



Anglers and boaters enjoy the new watercraft launch and moorage docks at Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park. A new campground with 31 full-hookup RV sites also was added.

If you haven't been to Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park in Coulee City for more than a season, you'll find two additions that have altered the landscape: a new campground and boating facilities.

The campground addition, which officially opened the week of March 20, includes 31 full-hookup RV sites, a group camp, and a new shower and restroom facility. The boating facilities feature a watercraft launch, moorage for 42 boats on Park Lake, swim beach, fish-cleaning station and fully accessible parking lots.

Park Ranger Denis Felton said the docks were up and running by Memorial Day last year and had heavy use. "People were saying they love the new facilities and especially love the fact they can moor their boats," Felton said. "Before moorage, boaters had to load and unload their boats in same day."

Anglers also are enjoying the new piers, saying they can now fish from the docks very comfortably without needing a boat to do quality fishing, Felton said.

The \$1.2 million campground addition was funded by grants from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, as well as the state building construction account. The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation funded the new boating facilities, which cost \$970,000.

What's new in your state parks

Youth lend a hand at Lake Sammamish: Members of seven east King County youth councils gathered to spruce up Lake Sammamish State Park in January. High school students worked together to landscape, clear trails, lay gravel and fix fencing. The main project involved connecting the East Lake Sammamish Trail to the Lake Sammamish facilities through the boat launch area. The project was one of the 100 Connections in State Parks' Centennial 2013 Plan.

Reservations available for Posey Island: A new reservation system begins April 3 for summer camping (May 15-Sept. 15) at Posey Island State Park on San Juan Island. The campsites on Posey Island, part of the Cascadia Marine Trail System, are for the exclusive use of those traveling by human- and/or wind-powered beachable vessels. To make a reservation, call Lime Kiln Point State Park at (360) 378-2044 or send a letter to 1567 West Side Road, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.

Parks license plate now in production

State Parks, working with the Department of Licensing and Correctional Industries, has created a specialty license plate that will be available this spring. The plate showcases some natural features of state parks from both Eastern and Western Washington, including Wallace Falls and Lake Wenatchee state parks. The license plate will sell for \$40 plus regular tab renewal fees. From the \$40 plate cost, \$28 will go to support the state parks system. After the first year, the cost of keeping the specialty plate will be \$30 in addition to tab renewal fees,

with \$28 going to state parks. The tentative availability date is May; watch the State Parks Web site, www. parks.wa.gov, for updated information.

